

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 AGR-10 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 EB-07 FRB-01 H-02 INR-07 L-02 LAB-04 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-02 AID-05 CIEP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TAR-01

TRSE-00 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 OIC-02 /103 W

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R 201702Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8481

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 02625

PASS AGRICULTURE

GENEVA FOR GATT

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECTR UK NFU HARDENS ATTITUDE TO OUTCOME OF EC
FEBRUARY 13 COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE MINISTERS' DECISIONS
AND ASSOCIATED UK MEASURES

REF: EC BRUSSELS 1275, FEBRUARY 13, 1975 AND LONDON 2523
FEBRUARY 19, 1975

BEGIN SUMMARY AFTER FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE
FEBRUARY 13 BRUSSELS FARM PRICE DECISIONS AND THE
ASSOCIATED UK ANNUAL REVIEW PRICE MOVES, THE UK NFU HAS
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CONSIDERABLY HARDENED ITS REACTION AS COMPARED WITH THE

CAUTIOUS WELCOME AS GIVEN TO THE MEASURES ON FEBRUARY 17
BY THE UNION PRESIDENT. END SUMMARY

1. ON FEBRUARY 18 THE COUNCIL OF THE UK NFU MET TO
CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS FOR BRITISH AGRICULTURE OF
THE FEBRUARY 13 EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' DECISIONS ON
1975-UFW COMMUNITY FARM PRICES AND THE UK PRICE REVIEW
ADJUSTMENTS ANNOUNCED BY AGRICULTURE MINISTER PEART IN
THE HOUSE OF COMMON ON FEBRUARY 17. FIRST REACTION FROM
THE UNION PRESIDENT, SIR HENRY PLUMB, ON FEBRUARY 17 WAS
A CAUTIOUS WELCOME FOR THE MOVES. ON FEBRUARY 18,
HOWEVER, THE UNION CONSIDERABLY HARDENED ITS LINE
FOLLOWING A UNION COUNCIL MEETING AT WHICH MEMBERS
EXPRESSED THEIR VIEW THAT THE REVISED PRICES WERE
INADEQUATE.

2. SIR HENRY PLUMB ISSUED A NEW STATEMENT ON FEBRUARY 18
HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE UK GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS. HE SAID
ABOUT THE NEW FARM PRICES, THEY WILL "RENEW NEITHER
CONFIDENCE NOR SECURITY.....UNLESS MORE IS DONE TO
RESTORE PROFITABILITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE, HOME FOOD
PRODUCTION WILL DWINDLE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WHOLE
NATION."

3. THE UNION STATEMENT SAID THAT ONLY IN THE SHEEP SEC-
TOR WOULD THE NEW PRICES ALLOW THEM TO DO ANY MORE THAN
RECOUP LAST YEAR'S COST RISES. THE AWARDS ON BEEF, PIGS,
POTATOES AND CEREALS AND THE LACK OF ANY MOVES ON POULTRY
AND EGGS GAINED THE COMPREHENSIVE DISAPPROVAL OF THE
NFU COUNCIL.

4. THE UNION BELIEVES THAT THE GOAL OF A BEEF GUARANTEE
OF BETWEEN 22 POUNDS AND 23 POUNDS PER LIVE CWT WOULD BE
INADEQUATE BY THE SECOND HALF OF 1975 WHEN FEED COSTS
COULD RISE SHARPLY. SIR HENRY'S STATEMENT SAID, "I DO
NOT NECESSARILY REGARD THE BEEF SCHEME AS A MAJOR REFORM
OF THE CAP."

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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5. ON THE PIG GUARANTEE THE UNION POINTS OUT THAT IT IS ONE POUND PER SCORE (20 LBS) BELOW CURRENT MARKET PRICES AND IF FARMERS, THROUGH A DROP IN THE PIG MARKET, WERE FORCED TO FALL BACK ON THE PIG GUARANTEE THEY WOULD BE LOSING MONEY, WITH A CONSEQUENT SHORTAGE OF PORK AND BACON LATER THIS YEAR.

6. ON CEREALS IT WAS CLAIMED THAT ARABLE FARMERS TOO WOULD FACE LOSSES IF MARKET PRICES CONTINUE TO FALL TO THE POINT WHERE THE GUARANTEE PRICES BECAME THE CHIEF RETURN.

7. THE NFU WAS ALSO HIGHLY CRITICAL THAT THE DEVALUATION
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OF THE UK GREEN POUND HAD NOT MATCHED DEVALUATION OF THE IRISH GREEN POUND.

COMMENT IN RETROSPECT, THE INITIAL FAIRLY BENEVOLENT REACTION OF THE NFU PRESIDENT TO THE BRUSSELS' AND BRITISH FARM PRICE DECISIONS WAS BOTH PUZZLING AND UNCHARACTERISTIC AND THE LATEST UNION STATEMENT IS MUCH MORE IN LINE WITH WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED. SIR HENRY PLUMB'S FIRST COMMENTS ARE ESPECIALLY SURPRISING IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT HE IS THE 1975 PRESIDENT OF

COPA WHICH HAD ALREADY EXPRESSED SEVERE DISAPPOINTMENT
THAT THEIR CALL FOR AN AVERAGE 15 PERCENT INCREASE IN
CAP PRICES HAD NOT BEEN SANCTIONED IN BRUSSELS.

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